

GAMING SYSTEM AND GAMING MACHINE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the priority of Japanese Patent Application No. 2004-341055 filed on Nov. 25, 2004, which is incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a gaming system and a gaming machine, and may be applied, for example, to a gaming machine in which a plurality of denominations of money can be used as a unit gaming fee, and to a gaming system which includes a gaming machine of this kind as a constituent element.

[0004] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] There are gaming machines in casinos, or the like, which have different unit gaming fees, the unit gaming fee being the smallest unit of the payment for playing one round of a game, and which also forms a reference for deciding the award amount in the event of a winning game result. The plurality of unit gaming fees (which may also be called "denominations") are based on different denominations of money, such as 1 cent, 25 cent, 1 dollar, and the like. In a casino or the like, in general, gaming machines which use the same denomination of money for the unit gaming fee are installed in the same fixed area. Therefore, if a player wishes to play a game using a different denomination, then he or she must move to a different area. This movement of the player causes a decline in the operating rate of the gaming machines.

[0006] In view of this point, in the prior art, gaming machines have been introduced which allow one of a plurality of different unit gaming fees to be set in the same gaming machine (see U.S. Pat. No. 6,506,116).

[0007] However, in a gaming machine in which the unit gaming fee can be set, although the player is able to select the unit gaming fee, the game that he or she plays is the same. Therefore, a gaming machine offering an unpopular game will have a low operating rate, even if it is provided with a function for changing the unit gaming fee, and this is a significant problem from the viewpoint of the operator of the game arcade where the gaming machine is located.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] An object of the present invention is to provide a gaming system and a gaming machine whereby the operating rate of a gaming machine can be raised by being able to respond flexibly to the wishes of the player with respect to the type of game, and the like.

[0009] In order to achieve the aforementioned object, the present invention provides a gaming system in which a plurality of game selection-enabled gaming machines, which implement a game on the basis of a unit gaming fee, are connected to a game providing server, via a network; wherein (1) the game providing server comprises: memory (game program storage means) for storing a plurality of types of games; and processor (download means) for permitting downloading a game program of a type of game requested by any of the game selection-enabled gaming

machines; and wherein (2) each of the gaming machines comprises: unit gaming fee selector (unit gaming fee selection means) for enabling selection of a unit gaming fee from a plurality of unit gaming fee candidates; game type selector (game type selection means) for enabling selection of a type of game from one or more game type candidates which accept the selected unit gaming fee; and processor (game program request means) for requesting a game program of the selected type of game, from the game providing server.

[0010] Further, the invention provides the gaming system, wherein the game providing server further comprises determination means for determining whether or not conditions for permitting downloading are satisfied, when a game program of a certain game type is requested by any of the game selection-enabled gaming machines.

[0011] The invention also provides the gaming system, wherein the determination means is configured to determine that downloading is not permitted in cases where if the current request is accepted and the game program is downloaded then a total number of gaming machines that downloaded the game program is equal to or greater than a threshold value, or is configured to determine that downloading is not permitted in cases where a ratio of the total number of gaming machines that downloaded the game program to a total number of said plurality of gaming machines is equal to or greater than a threshold value.

[0012] Further, the invention provides the gaming system, wherein each of the gaming machines comprises display means; and wherein game type selection means includes touch panel switches configured to change the type of game displayed on the display means.

[0013] In addition, the invention provides the gaming system, wherein each of the gaming machines comprises display means configured to display a gaming demonstration screen thereon during a changing of the type of game.

[0014] Still further, the invention provides the gaming system, wherein each of the gaming machines comprises display means, and wherein the unit gaming fee selection means includes touch panel switches configured to select the unit gaming fee displayed on the display means.

[0015] The invention may also provide the gaming system, wherein the network is any one of: a local area network, a public telecommunication network, a dedicated circuit in which the game providing server and the gaming machines are connected in a one-to-one fashion, and a radio circuit configured to provide radio communications between the game providing server and the gaming machines.

[0016] The invention provides a game selection-enabled gaming machine that implements a game on the basis of a unit gaming fee, comprising: unit gaming fee selector (unit gaming fee selection means) for enabling selection of a unit gaming fee from a plurality of unit gaming fee candidates; and game type selector (game type selection means) for enabling selection of a type of game from one or more game type candidates that accept the selected unit gaming fee.

[0017] Further, the invention provides the gaming machine further comprising game program request means for requesting a game program of the selected type of game from a game providing server connected via a network.